

In fact, in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Sweden and Finland have shrugged off a long history of neutrality to apply to join NATO. I applaud them for this and look forward to voting in favor of their accession treaties on the U.S. Senate floor here very soon.

Tomorrow, in fact, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is going to hold a hearing on their interest in joining the alliance. I urge my Senate colleagues to support this, and instead of causing global division, as he meant to do, show President Putin that he has brought NATO together and added to the strength of NATO.

I urge swift consideration of NATO expansion. Let's bring the Swedes and the Finns into the fold. We can't forget that Russia has claimed this war started because Ukraine wanted to join the NATO alliance. It is certainly true that as they reaffirmed in 2014, when they threw off a Russian-backed corrupt government, the people of Ukraine have been looking westward, not eastward.

Of course, they want to join NATO and they want to join the European Union and they want to form ever closer bonds with the transatlantic community—and they have made significant progress in doing this. This brutal invasion is just Russia's latest attempt to throw that progress off course, to stop them from what is their inevitable move to the West. We must not be deterred.

As I have said before, Ukraine deserves NATO membership and immediately the NATO membership action plan to provide a clear path to eventual membership. At the NATO summit in Madrid last week, much of the attention will rightfully be focused on Sweden and Finland, but I urge the leaders gathered there to remember Ukraine and Georgia in a similar situation as well.

Just last Friday, there was some big news. The European Commission recommended that Ukraine be granted candidate status to join the European Union. That is not NATO, but it is the European Union, the political union.

The recommendation by the European Commission, the EU's executive body, is a significant step forward toward EU membership. The Commission also recommended EU candidate status for Moldova, a country with its own troubled history with Russia.

Here we see Moldova between Romania and Ukraine. Transnistria is right along here, which is controlled by the Russians, a small part of Moldova. I visited Moldova last month and met with their government, including their Prime Minister.

We have a very strong partner in Moldova. They, too, are looking to the West. The people of Moldova want their freedom and freedom from Russian intimidation. When the leaders of the EU meet next month in Brussels, I hope they will strongly support both Ukraine's and Moldova's candidacies toward the European Union.

Soon, the Senate is going to adjourn for a couple of weeks. During that time, Ukraine will be continuing to defend its territorial integrity. I have now come to the floor, as I said, every week to highlight this fight—every week since this illegal, unprovoked, and brutal invasion began.

The Ukrainian people just want to live in peace, including with their neighbor, Russia. This is our fight during our generation where democracy is on the line. How this war develops will have far-reaching impacts on all of us, all freedom-loving countries, including the United States of America.

Most of us in this Chamber, Republicans and Democrats alike, get that. We know that America can't afford to stay on the sidelines and be a spectator in this conflict. At this crucial time in the battle for freedom, democracy, and the ability for countries to decide their own future, America cannot afford to be tentative. That is why we need to supply them with these mobile rocket launchers, the HIMAR system, to have the range and the ability to protect themselves.

Let's not be tentative. We must remember the lesson of the late 1930s: that appeasing tyrants will not satiate their desire to violently conquer and subjugate their neighbors. Ukrainians certainly understand this. They know what it is like to live under the thumb of authoritarians, the Soviets, the Russians, and they broke away from that and toward democracy, first in 1991 and again in 2014.

I was in Ukraine after the Revolution of Dignity, which is what they call it, in 2014, where Ukrainians decided for themselves that they wanted to turn away from Russian domination and corruption and turn to us—Europe and the United States—to pursue a more hopeful future of freedom and democracy.

Now President Putin is trying to extinguish that hope. We cannot let that happen. The countries of the free world are with us but more so when we lead. Now is not the time to equivocate.

At this critical juncture, let's work with allies to provide our democratic brothers and sisters in Ukraine what they actually need to protect their homeland and to defend democracy.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HASSAN). The majority leader is recognized.

GUN LEGISLATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, earlier this evening, Democratic and Republican negotiators finally released, after a lot of hard work, a bipartisan gun safety bill.

This bipartisan gun safety legislation is progress and will save lives. While it is not everything we want, this legislation is urgently needed. As the author of the Brady background checks bill, which passed in 1994, I am pleased that for the first time in nearly 30 years, Congress is back on the path to take

meaningful action to address gun violence.

I will now take the first steps to move this lifesaving legislation on the Senate floor for a vote, with an initial procedural vote tonight. Following that, we will move to final passage as soon as possible. I expect the bill to pass the Senate by the week's end.

I want to commend all of my colleagues—so many who worked so hard on this bill—for their diligent and astute efforts to finalize this legislation. I want to particularly single out Senators MURPHY, SINEMA, CORNYN, and TILLIS, who really led the charge to put this together.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion. The motion was agreed to.

JOSEPH WOODROW HATCHETT UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE AND FEDERAL BUILDING—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, it is my understanding the Senate has received a message from the House of Representatives to accompany S. 2938.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

VOTE ON MOTION TO PROCEED TO HOUSE MESSAGE

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask that the Chair lay before the Senate the message to accompany S. 2938, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

The result was announced—yeas 64, nays 34, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 235 Leg.]

YEAS—64

Baldwin	Graham	Portman
Bennet	Hassan	Reed
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Romney
Blunt	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Booker	Hirono	Sanders
Brown	Kaine	Schatz
Burr	Kelly	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Capito	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cardin	Leahy	Smith
Carper	Lujan	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Cassidy	Markey	Tillis
Collins	McConnell	Van Hollen
Coons	Menendez	Warner
Cornyn	Merkley	Warnock
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Warren
Duckworth	Murphy	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murray	Wyden
Ernst	Ossoff	Young
Feinstein	Padilla	
Gillibrand	Peters	